

Facts Pertaining to the Resignation of the 3rd
KONOYE Cabinet.

The 3rd KONOYE Cabinet started off with the great mission of readjusting the Japanese-American relations. For this reason, the retirement of Foreign Minister MATSUOKA was brought about and as only that was done, it can be said that all efforts were solely exerted toward the accomplishment of this great mission ever since the formation of the cabinet. However, America's attitude was by no means definite. There were various opinions as to why her attitude was not definite, but the opinion of the War Minister was that since America's basic policy is to advance into Asia, the reason for America's indefinite attitude is fundamental and consequently she lacks sincerity even in her negotiation. However, we continued our negotiation with the view that a temporary compromise and conciliation may be possible in regard to the current situation, even if our basic traditional policies may have been different.

Recently the negotiation reached a state of temporary deadlock due to the occupation of French Indo-China by our troops, but as it became known that we wouldn't go any further, the situation eased somewhat and the negotiation was again resumed. Hence, a message was sent to President Roosevelt on August 28 proposing a conference. Nevertheless, since President Roosevelt, in reply to this, stated that he was willing to hold a conference, but would like to have a general agreement reached in regard to the important matters, at least, as a premise, an Imperial conference was held on September 6 to determine the basis of the counter-measure for this.

As a result of the Imperial conference, it was decided to direct all our effort toward the diplomatic negotiation to the end, but to resolutely assume a war policy in the event no means for the conclusion of the negotiation is reached by early October.

Since there was a time limit of by early October, the negotiation was carried on hurriedly and as it didn't progress as expected, September passed and October came with the negotiation still not going smoothly. At about that time, the supreme command group became boisterous and stated that they will wait until October 15, but won't extend it beyond that. Therefore, I requested the assembly of the war minister, the navy minister, the foreign minister and the president of the Planning Board at OGIGAIISO for a final conference on the afternoon of October 12.

However, on the day before the conference, Chief Oka of the Naval Affairs Bureau came and in talking with him, he stated that with the exception of the Naval General Staff, the brains of the Navy don't want a Japanese-American war, but since the Navy, herself, can not say "she can't do it" in view of her approval of the decision of the Imperial Headquarters, the Navy Minister will propose to leave it in the hands of the Prime Minister at tomorrow's conference; so we would like you to decide on continuing the diplomatic negotiation.

Under such circumstance, this important conference was held at 2 p.m. on October 12 at OGIGAIISO. When the Prime Minister in opening the conference, stated:

At last, we have come to the stage where we must decide whether it is to be war or peace. In regard to this, let us first study whether there is any hope for a successful conclusion of the diplomatic negotiation,

War Minister TOJO, expressing the Army's point of view, stated:

There is absolutely no hope for a successful conclusion of the diplomatic negotiation.

However, Navy Minister OIKAWA stated:

Let us leave the decision as to whether there is any hope for a successful conclusion of the diplomatic negotiation in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister and as for the Navy, she will comply with that decision. If there is any hope for a successful conclusion of the diplomatic negotiation, we want the negotiation to be continued. Today, we are standing on the cross-road of peace or war. Until today, we have been making preparations for war on the one hand, while carrying on diplomatic negotiation on the other, but today we are actually confronting the crisis of peace or war. That is, if we are to rely on diplomatic negotiation, we would like it to be carried out thoroughly. Our preparations will fall behind if our attitude is to carry on diplomatic negotiation and then decide on war in the midst of it because it won't go smoothly. If we are to depend on diplomatic negotiation, we want to make it a success at all cost. Since we are standing on this important cross-road today, we want the decision of the Prime Minister at this time. We want to comply with this decision and go ahead.

Against this opinion of the Navy Minister, the War Minister replied:

The Premier, of course, is shouldering a grave responsibility, but we, too, are responsible as advisers. Hence, the determination of this great problem cannot be left solely in the hands of the Premier. I believe that there is no hope for a successful conclusion of the diplomatic negotiation, but if the Foreign Minister is fully confident of success, it may be given further consideration. Does the Foreign Minister have a confidence of success?

Since Foreign Minister TOYODA's views were asked, the Foreign Minister stated:

Since there is the second party, I can't say that I am confident of success, but, generally speaking, the important points in the negotiation with America are:

- (1) The Tripartite Alliance.
- (2) The economic problem in China.
- (3) The question of keeping our troops /T.N. in China/.

These three items are the obstacles. Of these, some sort of agreement can be reached in regard to item 1 and 2, but the third item pertaining to the question of keeping our troops /T.N. in China/ is the most difficult one. Since America is emphatically demanding for the complete withdrawal of our troops, I believe a compromise may be reached if we agree to a complete withdrawal of troops as a principle and station troops according to the time and place as specifically designated by an agreement or something between Japan and China, but I believe even this will be considerably difficult.

When this opinion was expressed, the War Minister, objecting emphatically, stated:

We can't yield on the question of withdrawal of troops. It must be done with occupation as its general principle and the remaining troops withdrawn. Since we have made such a tremendous sacrifice in this China Incident, it would be alright, properly speaking, to sever her territory, but in view of the KONOYE statement, that, too, cannot be done. Besides, a complete withdrawal of troops now cannot be done.

Hence, the Prime Minister stated:

If the War Minister insists as he does, it is not a question of whether there is any hope for a successful conclusion of the diplomatic negotiation. There definitely is no hope. As for the Foreign Minister, he could consider it

from the standpoint of the general situation and yield more. Only then, can it be said that there is hope for a successful conclusion of the negotiation. The Navy Minister is incessantly clamoring for the decision of the Premier, but I cannot decide on war at this time. Since I, as expressed in the opinion of the Foreign Minister, believe there is still hope of success, I cannot help but adopt the Foreign Minister's opinion if I must decide on one or the other.

At this point, the War Minister retorted:

It is still early for the Premier to cast a decision. We would like to have him consider the matter once more.

As it was mutually decided to reconsider the matter, the conference of four and a half hours was brought to an end at 6:30 p.m. However, through this conference, the position of each became clear.

Upon considering this matter fully, I find that, if I, at the conference, had accepted the proposal of the Navy Minister to leave it in the hands of the Premier and decided on "war" by yielding to the opinion of the War Minister, the decision would have stood since the Navy Minister could not have opposed it and that it certainly would have brought about a matter of grave concern to the Empire. On looking back, I cannot help but feel my flesh creeping.

On the night (8:00 - 10:30) of October 13, I requested Foreign Minister TOYODA to call on me in the Japanese room of my official residence. When I inquired about the subsequent developments of the negotiation with America, he expressed the opinion that we inevitably must give up our occupation, that it wouldn't matter if the withdrawal is made with a time limit or summarily without it and that there is no means of settlement other than this.

Prior to the cabinet meeting on the morning of October 14, I requested the War Minister to call on me. As a result of my deliberation and based on last night's opinion of the Foreign Minister, I told him as follows:

In regard to the question of occupation, the result is clear if done according to the War Minister's contention, but if we were to yield on our pretence and take the reality, I believe that there is still hope in the negotiation. At this time, I wonder if we shouldn't make up our mind to readjust the Japanese-American relationship, the future of which is very risky? I deeply realize my responsibility for the Sino-Japanese Incident, but with the China

Incident still unsettled after four years, I wonder if we should further extend our hands toward the South. If it can be settled in one or two years, that is another matter, but judging from the opinion of experts, I find that no one thinks that it can be settled in one or two years. The consensus of opinions, practically, is that if the arrow should leave the bow, it may take five or ten years.

This is Count KANEKO's story, but at the time of the commencement of hostilities between Japan and Russia, Emperor Meiji, too, was unable to make a decision. So, early on the morning of February 4, when the final Imperial conference was to be held, he called in Prince ITO and asked him if there was any hope of winning the war with Russia. Hence, Prince ITO replied, "There isn't any hope of winning, but it may be possible to prevent the invasion of Korea by the Russian Army for about a year or a year and a half. In the meantime, we must request a third power to intervene and end the war, but since England and France are our allies, respectively, we have no third power other than America whom we can ask to intervene." Hence, it was finally decided at the Imperial conference of that day to commence hostilities, but that night Prince ITO reportedly called Count KANEKO and asked him to go to America immediately after telling him of the above. In other words, they were thinking of the ending of the war at the time of the starting of the war.

When Field Marshal OYAMA was about to leave for Manchuria as commander-in-chief of the Manchurian Forces, he reportedly stated, "I will have nothing to do. Mr. KODAMA will do the fighting for me. But I may be of some help when the war is to be ended". The preparedness of our elders of that period is worthy of note.

If we should start a war with America this time, it will be a real world war and there'll be no one to intervene. Even the international situation is very different from that of the Russo-Japan War period and even our ally Germany, she is extremely powerless in the Orient.

If hostilities should commence, Japan will have to take the initiative and attack the Philippines. As for America, since it will be the first time her domain will be attacked, the flaring up of her public sentiment is more than imaginable and it, I believe, will be more than the down with Germany sentiment expressed to date. The reason for Lindberg's opposition to participation in the war is the hopelessness of winning against Germany, but since the relationship in the event of an attack on the Philippines

by Japan is different, there is the danger of such sentiment as down with Hitler being blown away and changing completely into an anti-Japanese sentiment.

Furthermore, since England is strengthening her sentiment of resistance against Germany on the strength of America's aid, it is a natural course for a peace movement to stir up within England if a Japanese-American war should break out and decrease the aid to England and if Germany would undertake her landing operation at this opportune time, it would be fine. But since Germany, too, has considerably depleted her national strength in her war with Soviet Russia and since naval strength will be involved if a landing operation is to be undertaken, it may be proper to regard that the peace feeling in Germany, too, will become strong in proportion to the peace feeling in England. That is, it seems as if a Japanese-American war will hasten the peace in Europe, and it must be viewed that there is the danger of peace being brought about among England, America, Germany and Soviet Russia at the cost of the Far East.

In other words, considerable thought should be given to the opening of hostilities between Japan and America. Hence, I believe that it would be better first to bring an end to the China Incident and to have at the peace conference a reasonable voice backed by a faultless Navy. What do you think?

In reply to this, the War Minister stated:

In view of so much sacrifice, withdrawal of our troops cannot be undertaken as a principle. I can't yield to this even if I were to risk my position. Since America's real intention is control of the Far East, if we were to make one concession, the situation will probably be that she'll demand for another and not know where to stop her demands.

The Premier makes such remarks because he fully knows our domestic weaknesses, but since America too, should have her weaknesses, I must say that the Premier's view is too pessimistic.

Since such was his retort, I took leave of the War Minister remarking that such being the case nothing can be done because it's a difference of opinion and that I wanted him to make the same statement at the cabinet meeting.

At the cabinet meeting from 10:30 a.m. on that day, the War Minister expressed his above-mentioned opinion and the War Minister was the absolute master of the situation with no one among the cabinet members voicing approval or disapproval. Thus, the cabinet reached a complete deadlock.

In the meantime, it became gradually known within Army quarters that since the Navy, her self, had no will to fight, but couldn't say so her self, she was appealing to the Premier through Bureau Chief OKA via Chief Secretary TOMITA for the Premier to express it. Consequently, the Army came forward with the remark that since war with America, in the first place, is a naval matter, it cannot be carried out no matter how persistent the Army may be if the Navy does not approve of it and that if the Navy would say she can't do it if she can't do it, then we can find a way to dissuade our subordinates and bring order within the service, but order can't be brought about within the service within only the Premier stating it.

As an outcome of it, Chief MUTO of the Military Affairs Bureau called on Chief Secretary TOMITA and reportedly requested that the Navy be asked to make a definite statement at this time. Hence, when Chief Secretary TOMITA relayed this to Chief OKA of the Naval Affairs Bureau, Bureau Chief OKA reportedly stated that the Navy, as usual, cannot say it and that she can say no more than that she will comply with the decision of the Premier. Nevertheless, since the Army, too, insisted that it's of no use without the Navy saying it, but only vaguely stated by the Premier, the attempt to break the deadlock was abandoned.

However, late on the night of the 14th (10:30 p.m. -- 00:30 a.m. of the next day), President SUZUKI of the Planning Board came to OGIGAISSC as messenger of War Minister TOJO. According to his statement, /TOJO/ had stated:

Nothing can be done since the opinions of the Premier and mine (the War Minister) had clashed head on. However, on inquiring more and more about the circumstances, I have found that it is the navy that is staggering the determination of the Premier. If only the navy would definitely say so, things would be all right, but if she claims she can't say it, the situation will only check and counter-check itself. Therefore, I have reached this conclusion. I believe that there is no other alternative but to return the decision of the recent Imperial conference back to a clean slate once more by all of us, even including all of the supreme command, resigning and to start anew with new men coming forward. Then, if the new men coming forward should decide that we won't fight, that may appear to be the end of it, but the Army is ~~straining at the~~ leash. There is no one among the Emperor's subject other than Prince KONOYE who can shoulder this grave crisis, but since he ought not to be troubled this time in view of the circumstances of the Prince to date, I believe that there is no alternative but to request Prince HIGASHI-KUNI to take over at this time. Please relay this to the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal KIDO, also.

This is highly out of the ordinary, but it is a plan. I replied that this be relayed to the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal KIDO, also. When President SUZUKI called on the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal KIDO on the morning of the following day, the 15th, and informed him of this the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal reportedly did not express approval or disapproval, but it appeared as if the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal had reported this to the Emperor immediately and since the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal requested the Premier to come forward and report the present situation to the Emperor, I went to the palace at 4 p.m. on the 15th and reported in detail the developments to date. When I reported:

The navy does not want war, but she can't say so in view of the decision of the Imperial Conference. On hearing that, I, as Premier, can't agree to war all the more. I do think that the plan of the War Minister to request Prince HIGASHI-KUNI to take over is a means that would break the deadlocked situation, the Emperor replied:

I would like to maintain peace to the very end. Since the appearance of an Imperial prince would make him appear to be my personal representative, it would be bad for an Imperial prince to take over and decide on war. If an Imperial prince takes over, he must decide on peace. If it should be decided on peace, will the army submit to

the regulation? Besides, since it is an unprecedented thing for an Imperial prince to take over, the selection of cabinet members must be done very carefully.

Thus, the Emperor seemed to have accepted the resignation of the KONOYE cabinet tacitly.

Generally speaking, I wonder if War Minister TOJO's reason for bringing out an Imperial prince is to take the issue to a strong group or to take it to a weak group? According to President SUZUKI, it appears to be for a change of direction, but in view of a report that a group of advocates of positive action is planning to use the Imperial prince as a figure-head and carry out their positive view and since the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal requested that the intention of the War Minister be ascertained once more, I called President SUZUKI and had him ascertain the intention of the War Minister as well as whether the army will submit to the regulation in the event it were to be decided on "peace," a matter of concern to the Emperor. The reply of the War Minister reportedly was that he could not state definitely that the army would submit to the regulation in the event it is decided on "peace." He further added ~~though~~ ambiguously:

Assuming that it is decided on "peace," there wouldn't be anyone other than an Imperial prince who would be able to suppress the army.

Therefore, at 8 o'clock on the night of the 15th, I secretly visited the residence of Prince HIGASHI-KUNI and informed him of the circumstances to date. And then I told him:

In connection with our desire that the war must be prevented somehow, to solicit for the aid of an Imperial prince is an unprecedented thing, but there is no means other than this to return the decision of the past to a clean slate. The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal KIDO is afraid that it may affect your reputation, but since it will bring trouble to not only your highness, but also to the Imperial Household if war should break out, I beg that you consider yourself to be Prince MORINAGA and put forth your whole effort at this time.

His Imperial Highness stated that he would like to think it over since it was a grave matter and wondered if he could suppress the army with his own strength.

On the 16th, I began collecting the letters of resignation of the cabinet members from morning and when I informed the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal KIDO that I was going to the palace to present them to the Emperor now as I had collected all of them in the afternoon, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal asked me to hold off. Stating that because I had collected all of the letters of resignation, I visited the palace

at 5 o'clock and explaining the reason as disagreement of opinion within the cabinet, I presented the resignation of the entire cabinet members and retired from the presence of the Emperor. I met the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal KIDO and inquired as to what he thought of the Imperial prince. According to the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, since His Majesty claims that it would be very embarrassing, he has finally decided to summon both, TOJO and OIKAWA, simultaneously, issue the Imperial Mandate for the formation of the succeeding cabinet to one of them and order the other to cooperate and, at the same time, he also issued an instruction to the effect that the decision of the Imperial Conference of September 6 be reconsidered.

As to whom it shall be, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal explained that since the War Minister had clashed head-on with the Premier, it would be like recognizing his contention if it is given to him. Hence, he believes that it would be better to take the middle course and offer it to the Navy Minister--since the Navy Minister actually does not want war, but this has not been brought to light. The Emperor, too, has been informed to that effect.

However, it can be thought in this manner, also. Since the problem is the army, there would be a danger of the army springing back all the more if it is offered to the Navy. Hence, wouldn't it be better to offer it to the stronger side and alleviate the situation? Since America is of the opinion that the army would reverse things even if decided upon by the KONOYE cabinet, she will be all the more surprised if TOJO cabinet is formed after it, in view of the fact that she already is all the more convinced that it will be war with the resignation of the KONOYE Cabinet. But if the TOJO Cabinet, contrary to expectations, should continue to carry on the negotiation, it may instead make her feel relieved and bring about a better result. /TN: The following sentence is crossed out/ As to whom it should be, I believe that it would be better to have TOJO.

Upon expressing my opinion thusly /TN: crossed out/, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal asked me to consider the above advantages and disadvantages until tomorrow.

On the morning of the 17th, I sent a message to the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal that TOJO would be better (if guarantee of peace is obtained).

On the 17th, the chief retainers' conference will be held in the palace at 1 p.m., after which the Emperor is expected to summon both TOJO and OIKAWA and issue the Imperial Mandate and, at the same time, an instruction to the effect that the Army and the Navy should cooperate and that the decision of the Imperial Conference of September 6 should be reconsidered.

A F F I D A V I T

I, Tomohiko^o USHIBA, Japanese nation, former private secretary to the late Prince KONOYE, first being duly sworn, do make affidavit as follows:

THAT, the writing to which this affidavit is attached, consisting of 37 pages (now marked for identification as International Prosecution Section Document No. 497) entitled "Facts Pertaining to the Resignation of the Third Konoye Cabinet" is in the handwriting of Shigeki ARAYA, one of the former private secretaries to the late Prince KONOYE and was dictated to him by Prince KONOYE, excepting only that portion of the writing which appears on page 35 and the two unnumbered pages following, which has been written in red, and that the portion written in red is in the handwriting of the late Prince KONOYE.

In witness thereof I have hereunto affixed my signature
this 5 day of November 1946.

/s/ Tomo. Ushiba

Subscribed and sworn to before
me by Tomohiko USHIBA this
5 day of November 1946.

/s/ Douglas L. Waldorf
Douglas L. Waldorf
Chief, Investigation Division
International Prosecution Section